

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5857

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY DACCA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: FURTHER SPECULATION THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL CALL
A SNAP POLL

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 12253; (B) NEW DELHI 15809

1. THE CAPITAL IS ONCE AGAIN BUZZING WITH RUMORS THAT MRS. GANDHI MAY CALL A SNAP ELECTION, AS SHE DID IN 1971. BECAUSE THERE HAS TO BE A PARLIAMENT TO MEET TO APPROVE THE BUDGET BY THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR APRIL 1, MRS. GANDHI EITHER HAS TO ANNOUNCE THE ELCTION IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO OR WAIT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS. THE LAST TIME, SHE DISSOLVED PARLIAMENT DECEMBER 27 AND ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN FEBRUARY. REDISTRICTING OF CONSTITUENCIES ON THE BASIS OF THE 1971 CONSUS ISN'T COMPLETED, BUT AS WE REPORTED IN REF B, THAT IS NOT AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE.

2. OBSERVERS CITE AS EVIDENCE THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL CALL A SNAP ELECTION THE CONGRESS PARTY "CAMPS" SHE IS HOLDING THROUGHOUT
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THE COUNTRY, REVISION OF ELECTION ROLLS, AND EVEN SOME REPORTS OF

COLLECTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS. THESE OBSERVERS INTERPRET A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT THAT IT HAS NOT MADE A DECISION TO HOLD AN EARLY ELECTION AS A LEFT-HANDED ADMISSION THAT THERE WILL BE ONE.

3. THE MOTIVE FOR AN EARLY ELECTION WOULD BE TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE IN MRS. GANDHI'S CONFRONTATION WITH J. P. NARAYAN, BEFORE HE BUILDS UP ANY MORE MOMENTUM. SHE COULD DISSOLVE THE HOPE-LESS BIHAR ASSEMBLY AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE LOK SABHA DISSOLUTION WITHOUT APPEARING TO HAVE SUCCUMBED TO NARAJAN'S PRESSURE. FURTHERMORE,

PRICES HAVE EASED A BIT RIGHT NOW BUT COULD GO UP AGAIN LATER.

4. WE DON'T KNOW IF MRS. GANDHI HAS DECIDED, BUT AT A MINIMUM SHE IS KEEPING HER OPTIONS OPEN. SHE COULD ALSO GO FOR AN ELECTION AFTER THE BUDGET SESSION AND BEFORE THE MONSOON, OR POSSIBLY LATER IN 1975, AFTER THE MONSOON. AMONG OTHER THINGS, AN EARLY ELECTION WOULD INCREASE THE WEIGHT THE GOI GIVES DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS IN CONSIDERING ISSUES SUCH AS THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SHEIKH ABDUALLAH, DISCUSSIONS WITH BANGLADESH OVER THE GANGES WATERS, AND INDO-US RELATIONS. MOYNIHAN

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